

Reuben Peck was our neighbor for years and was one of our boyish heroes. Uncle Reuben was ever active in the church and town, no man had a warmer heart nor was a more earnest Christian ever ready to help in every good work. But what made Uncle Reuben great was his skill in handling an ox team. He was an expert with a yoke of oxen and would make them pull more and work harder than any one else and his oxen seemed to know that when they were in the yoke they had to do their level best. Uncle Reuben was in his glory when he had driven the grab hooks and gave the word his oxen settled themselves into the yoke and the roots, dirt and ashes would fly as they took their way to the heaps. Uncle Reuben did not train his oxen to work by whispering or pointing the finger. He had a strong pair of lungs and used them when he was driving oxen. You could tell if you were anywhere within 1/2 mile whether he was at work with the oxen.

One time when Uncle Reuben was a young man, he had a pair of 5-year old steers that were the apple of his eye and while clearing land always bragged about them. The two men who were helping him were Orin Griswold and James McMullen and they made a bet with Uncle Reuben that they could put in place all day long any log that he could draw up to the log heap without the use of skids or hand spikes, that is with nothing but their hands and they did it. All were large logs.

But to us boys, Uncle Reuben was in his glory when he was in a contest with some other men as to which had the oxen who could pull the most. I remember at the County Fair when my father had a yoke of oxen driven by my Uncle Ensign McMullen, who was also a crack ox teamster.

As my father's team pulled until they could not move the load, Uncle Reuben hooked on his team and pulled the load about 100 ft. farther. He then took my father's team and hooked them to the load and when they heard the trumpet tones of his voice, they nearly ran away with the load and Uncle Reuben won the prize for father's team and the two Deacons came very near to a quarrel as father insisted that the prize was Uncle Reuben's and not his.